



Role of public diplomacy in establishing nation branding and public diplomacy possibilities of Turkey¹

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Abstract

Public Diplomacy is based on the promotion of countries' values to the world. Such countries using the elements described as "Soft Power" such as science, art, sport, sport, culture and education" professionally have become a center of attraction and these countries have lost their influential power. The instruments of Public Diplomacy enabling the interstate interaction also have paved the way for economic, political and cultural cooperation and friendship. The main goal of Public Diplomacy is; building long-established relations. Public Diplomacy is based on the assumption that the fame and prestige of a country are powers creating favorable area for the individual interaction. Public Diplomacy is also understood as a communication policy and process of a country promoting its own nation's views and goals; institutions and culture; national goals and current policy to the foreign publics. In the new international system when there is fierce competition and uncertainty has increased, these have gained importance to protect the countries' interest, expressing themselves well to improve economic, political, cultural and social relations and creating a positive perception. Similar to goods and services, countries also aim to have an effective position in the international system by establishing their own "brand". Public diplomacy management plays an important role in establishing nation-branding. There is a need for the public diplomacy vision to manage image, prestige and perception leading to create a strategic road map. In this essay, the role of public diplomacy in establishing nation-branding is underlined and public diplomacy possibilities of Turkey are discussed elaborately. This essay also aims to reveal the grounds of thesis that "Turkey could establish a strong nation-branding with current public diplomacy possibility.

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1. Introduction

Following to the end of Cold War, a new paradigm was created by the beginning of globalization process. Almost all the elements of the Cold War era were not useful anymore. Techniques, methods and in Cold War era became inefficient. The re-created international system brought distinctive rules and methods. Due to the globalization process remote sites were connected to each other, local organizations were shaped by events happened in millions miles away (Giddens, 2004, 69). There are various dimensions of the Globalization. While the military dimension embodies solidarity networks such as power and threat of power, social dimension covers spread of culture, view and image. The globalization politically stands out as spread of legal regulation, democratization effort, international organizations becoming prominent and increasing impact of NGO (Nye, 2002, 83).

During globalization process, besides the changes in policy and management, non-state actors started to have impact on global relations apart from nation-states. The inter-state relations have shifted from the nation-state level

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to the international one. The most important element of this international level is public opinion. In this process, it has become compulsory to perceive public opinion and inform them in a realist and right way (Yavasgel, 2004, 1).

2. Change in the New International System and Diplomacy

There were dramatically important changes in the field of diplomacy in the new international system; the government started to represent democratic legitimacy and responsibility in foreign policy and diplomacy. Furthermore, non-state institutions, international regional institutions and multi-national companies were among the actors which had to be included in the process to implement policy (Tuncer, 2009, 134). The new international system is a multi-polar system. While the multi-polar system decreases the importance of military force and realist approach in relations between countries, it increases the importance of idealism, cultural relation, diplomacy and interaction. All this improvement legitimize the consideration of social, global and political backgrounds (soft powers) for states and countries to implement the foreign policy (Canbolat, 2009,8).

Diplomacy is a process in which states directly convey their view about a specific topic to the decision makers of the other states. This process is carried out by negotiations between government officers (Gonlubol, 1993, 115). The notion of diplomacy includes various affecting methods and techniques which are used in a state's foreign policy (Sonmezoglu, 1989, 323). Diplomacy has an important role in reaching the message of state to the masses and communicating with them. These have become really difficult to draw the attention of masses, reaching pursuant message and manipulating for their own domestic policy in today's world where the communication technology and information have developed; besides, information and news sources have increased. The phenomenon of diplomacy is successful as long as it is functional and fulfills the responsibility. The rapid improvement in information technology also affects the diplomacy in globalization process. It nearly leads a paradigm shift (Tiedeman, 8).

The diplomatic relations which were inter-state relations in the Cold War era, have evolved into an inter-society relations as new actors such as media, public opinion, NGOs, international institutions have appeared in the new international system and these actors have begun to have impact on decision makers (Kalin, 2011, 6). For the states, these have become really important to play an effective role in the new international system to understand the importance of public diplomacy, favorable strategies and establishing a "nation-branding".

3. Need for Public Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy has become prominent in the new international system in which interaction plays a strategic role and the determining role of public opinion increases. Public diplomacy is an effort to manipulate the public for shaping and implementing the foreign policy. Public diplomacy, apart from traditional one, embodies the effort of molding public opinion in other countries, inter-state interaction of NGOs and cultural communication process (Morrow). The governments and NGOs could reach their view to the foreign NGOs and public opinion through public diplomacy (Inan, 2012, 64). Public diplomacy has emphasized on communication process created for gaining sympathy of foreign opinion to serve for the views, goals and interests of a country. Actually it is objected to manipulate foreign governments' manners by affecting manners and behaviors of foreign society (Snitzer, 2008, 206).

Public diplomacy aimed to affect foreign public opinions and established on interest, opportunity, threat based evaluations and potential danger is different from traditional diplomacy. Public diplomacy aims non-governmental actors and public opinions. Through public diplomacy, countries could spread the dialogue between their own publics, institutions and foreign ones. These are among the aims of public diplomacy to inform and manipulate the foreign public opinion and improving this effect, settling disorder caused by misunderstanding and false acceptance (Dogan, 212, 13).

4. Public Diplomacy and “Nation Branding” Establishing

A new state have been created the end of bilateral Cold War era, beginning of new multi-polar international system, rapid changes in communication and information technologies, globalization of product, solving the nation-state structure, fluid finance across the world, increasing uncertainty and competition. There is no more relative “security” of the Cold War era. On Contrary, there is a world, experiencing rapid changes, having economic, social and cultural results, impossible to predict and competitive. It is not really simple to exist, survive, compete and keep the power in such a world. It is not the guarantee of future and security to produce, sell or earn much in the new multi-polar international system as the conditions can change in any time. Furthermore, convincing the public opinion was not cared in old wars but dominant actor in the new world order plays an important strategic role.

On this point, the topic of “branding” of countries reveals as distinguishing countries from the others in the competition, communication, technological innovations and creation of morality. In the new international system in which strategic communication, perception, image, prestige and trust become prominent, countries, like trademarks, requires to rebuild and reposition themselves before the public opinion (Erzen, 2012, 115). These are important for creating public opinion’s perception to accurate and reliable informing, effective communication, clear channels of feedback and effective design of messages. For establishing a reliable, powerful and prestigious perception of a country a strategic branding road map should be followed.

5. The role of “Soft Power” in Nation-Branding Establishment

The elements of “soft power” are really important in nation-branding establishment. Some of the soft power sources such as culture, science, art, sport, education and etc have assisted to establish effective and long term communication and interaction with the public opinion. As a result of the relation established by these instruments has both created a positive perception of country and established new relations and corporation on a different area. In the new international system, the most important perception of a country is a prestigious, powerful, reliable and honest country image. This perception is a branding having very important strategic value for countries. Countries, building and improving their nation-branding in this way will become desired countries for investment, building relation on notably political, social and cultural areas and even living there.

Public diplomacy has an important role in countries’ nation-branding with its instruments and techniques. Public diplomacy, mobilizing the countries’ “soft power” effective use of this power against the public opinion, meeting NGOs, media, opinion leaders and universities on specific goals have an effect on establishing nation-branding. Such countries which establish nation-branding by using techniques and methods of public diplomacy have created a powerful image and perception in the new international system. The tourism, brand export and foreign direct investment have contributed to the nation branding establishment. This strengthens the prestige of countries to export their own brands. The countries are remembered with their powerful brands and the positive perception in the customers’ mind reflects this prestige (Erzen, 2012, 113). The country promotions are thought as a goal of attracting tourism and investors. However, the country promotions should be realized together with the public diplomacy and handle an integrative approach with values of the world such as science, art, culture, sport, business world, universities and etc. When it is realized, it will increasingly contribute to either country promotion or branding.

6. Nation-Branding Establishment and Public Diplomacy Opportunities of Turkey

Turkey is an important country with historical heritage, cultural value, geostrategic position and human sources. Despite this image, the perception in the external world as Turkey embodies deep tracks of 3 different military interventions. It has such a country image that could not solve the problems about democratization, human rights and freedom Turkey has also been struggling with prohibitions. This image has been changing dramatically with the EU membership process, important legal regulations notably about democratization have been carried out and the

obstacles in front of freedoms have been removed. Although Turkey could not create a civil constitution, it has recorded improvement comparing to the past.

Despite Turkey's development in democracy, human rights and freedom, the perception in the external world notable the West is not so hopeful. As a result, Turkey could not explain or promote itself to the outside world and could not make an effective and permanent attempt to correct negative perception in the past. Turkey needs to establish "nation-branding". The most important instrument in establishing its own brand is public diplomacy strategy.

Turkey has been changing, transforming, developing and recording improvement in important field but it is not very successful to introduce itself. Turkish public diplomacy is an activity of telling its "new story" effectively and comprehensively to the public opinion of the world. The context of this activity is determined by the heritage of history and geography (Kalin, 2012, 157).

7. Turkey's Need; "National Public Diplomacy Strategy"

Turkey did not understand the importance of public diplomacy and could not use the strategic power of 21st century. Public Diplomacy Coordination has been founded under the Presidency and some activities have started to be carried out. The activity of public diplomacy has been carried out under the control of Public Diplomacy Institution, arranged scientific meeting, published book and report and the importance of public diplomacy is mentioned to the public. Apart from these two situations, there is no institutional structure in scientific sense. This obstructs Turkey to utilize from the opportunities and potential of public diplomacy effectively as there is no perception about importance of public diplomacy in society and they are not informed sufficiently about the capabilities of this strategic instrument of the new century. Informing and supporting the society might be primarily increased as the first step to establish nation-branding. Social conscious to be created about the public diplomacy will importantly contribute to establish long term and healthy nation-branding. Almost 200 universities in Turkey could also be mobilized for public diplomacy. This could help to analyze the topic scientifically and create a road map for Turkey.

Turkey needs to determine a national public diplomacy strategy and policy with its opportunities of public diplomacy before establishing its own nation-branding. While determining this policy, all the parts of society, NGOs, media, opinion leaders should contribute to a long term road map should be created with a common mind (Ozkan, 2012, 11). The "nation-branding" of Turkey could only have a strong basis for its "nation-branding" by doing this. It will also be easier to convince, attract them and win their heart.

8. Conclusion and Debate

It has seemed that it is not possible to act with the methods and techniques of the cold war era in the new international system brought by globalization process. It has become obligatory for countries to behave according to requirements of international system to gain an advantage over competition.

The public opinion has become important and it has become inevitable to convince the public opinion and inform them correctly. The hard power has lost the effect of countries in the new international system. On contrast, soft power including cultural value, historical heritage and possibilities has become prominent. The relation "inter-state" has evolved into an "inter-society". The countries, using their capacity effectively have become an attraction center (Ozkan, 2012, 9).

Public diplomacy has gained a strategic importance in some topics such as imposing a policy on other countries/societies and taking their support. The countries have utilized from the public diplomacy strategies for "public diplomacy establishment" which enables for a country that it could distinguish itself in the competition, communication, technologic innovations and value creation (Gokirmak, 2011, 5). Thus, countries have created powerful, reliable and prestigious perception. The countries establishing nation-branding through Public Diplomacy have established long-term and permanent relation. They have also obtained important acquisitions in the fields of economic, social, political and cultural.

Turkey has really important opportunities in Public Diplomacy. The efforts of cultural values, human sources, historical heritage, democratizations are enough to establish a positive nation-branding. On contrary, the importance of public diplomacy was realized too late and could not be utilized properly. The recent conscious of Public Diplomacy both in country management and society has given signals about its more effective future use.

It is dramatically important for Turkey that it needs to determine a “Public Diplomacy Policy” on which all parts of society agreed and this policy should be implemented independently of the government. The democratization efforts of Turkey should be accelerated and the goal of being more free, respect for the human rights, accepting the principles of the state of law, equitable distribution of income should be realized while these positive steps are the basic of nation-branding establishment. “Turkish Brand” established on a strong bases, will be long-term and permanent and have the characteristic of attraction center for other countries. Not only Turkey but all the countries desiring to establish its own brand powerfully and safely in international system, should act in the same way.

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